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KYRGYZSTAN PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM (KPSP)

END OF YEAR ONE ANNUAL REPORT

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PARLIAMENTARY CONTEXT

Following the ouster of Kyrgyz President Bekiev in April 2010 and the adoption of a parliamentary centric system via constitutional referendum in June 2010, national elections were held in October 2010 for the Jogorku Kenesh (JK). Five political parties [factions] overcame both the nationally and regionally required thresholds to gain seats in the JK. In the order of their representation: Ata Jurt has 28 seats; the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) has 26 seats; Ar Namys has 25 seats; Respublika has 23 seats; and Ata Meken 18 seats. Overall, 120 MPs serve in the JK. All MPs are elected from party lists.

The first attempt to establish a ruling majority coalition was unsuccessful in December 2010, but shortly thereafter also in December 2010 a second attempt produced a ruling majority coalition made up of Ata Jurt, SDPK, and Respublika. The leader of Ata Jurt became the JK Speaker with each faction including those in opposition (Ar Namys and Ata Meken) receiving a Deputy Speaker post. The leader of SDPK became the Prime Minister with working control of the various Kyrgyz executive branch ministries, departments, and agencies divided among the ruling coalition.

Sixteen legislative committees were established with two of them (Budget and Finance and Law and Order, Legality, and Combating Corruption) according to the Kyrgyz Constitution chaired by factions in opposition. Ar Namys and Ata Meken were fully engaged and involved as the opposition and initiated numerous legislative bills which became law, especially in the areas of judicial and electoral reform.

JK plenary sessions were held on Thursdays and Fridays with committee sittings and other forums held primarily on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Mondays and weekends were utilized by the factions for outreach to and contact with constituents. The JK was on summer recess from July 2, 2011 through August 31, 2011 although special sessions were held on July 8, 2011 and August 15, 2011. Kyrgyzstan holding presidential elections on October 30, 2011 undoubtedly influenced, but did not stop or paralyze the ongoing work and activities of the JK.

OVERVIEW

The Kyrgyzstan Parliamentary Strengthening Program (KPSP) is a three-year technical assistance initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI). Phase 1 consisted of completion of

a parliamentary assessment, design of a parliamentary strengthening program, and limited implementation of activities during the six month period from October 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011. Phase 2 is a full scale parliamentary strengthening program during the 2.5 year period from April 1, 2011 to September 30, 2013.

USAID awarded the KPSP to DAI in September 2010 with the intention of seeing a rapid mobilization and start-up. USAID often refers to the KPSP as its “flagship” Program in Kyrgyzstan and has frequently emphasized that the Program is very closely watched at high levels within USAID, the US Department of State, and US National Security Council. The award was sole source and the contract during Phase 1 was fixed price and during Phase 2 a hybrid version of cost-plus and fixed price.

During its first quarter, the KPSP: arrived on the ground in Kyrgyzstan with DAI Home Office-based staff conducting start up activities; legally accredited and set up a local office; hired experienced and pro-active local staff; hired an experienced permanent COP who later began work on January 10, 2011; conducted an “immediate needs assessment” as well as a (later after the JK began working) “broader assessment”; partnered with OTI/IRG to provide information technology equipment to the JK Legal Department and Human Resources (HR) Division; established constructive working relations with numerous MPs including legislative committee chairs, the JK [non-elected] Administration, and permanent staff; and emerged with constructive and collegial relations with implementers already assisting the JK.

As a result of the “immediate needs assessment” and the “broader assessment” and also based on DAI’s experience in implementing parliamentary strengthening programs in different countries, several overall general type of decisions relating to the KPSP were made during the first quarter that guide the KPSP in daily implementation during all future quarters. First, the KPSP serves as a coordinator and facilitator creating synergies and linkages between the JK and other USAID and USG funded assistance programs. In this manner, the KPSP maintains close communications and cooperation with other international donor programs to improve overall macro results and avoid duplication of activities thereby better utilizing limited donor program funds. Second, in all of its activities, the KPSP adopts and takes a non-political, non-partisan approach in programmatic activities and attendant relations with JK factions. This approach well positions the KPSP to produce solid results through achieving Program deliverables while also engendering the uniform professional trust and good will of the Speaker and Vice-Speakers, faction leaders, committee chairs, and rank and file MPs. Third, KPSP programming is flexible, adaptable, and responsive to JK requests, initiatives, and needs. This responsiveness and timeliness sets the KPSP favorably apart from other international donor programs who frequently base their programming solely (or almost solely) on what they believe is best for the host country institution(s) they are assisting.

During its second quarter, the KPSP began implementation of programmatic activities through trainings, public forums, and policy seminars relating to the areas of legislative process and

procedure, committee strengthening, and human resources management. These areas of programming would ultimately become KPSP programmatic Components 1, 2, and 4 during Phase 2. In parallel to these activities, the KPSP designed a full scale parliamentary strengthening program consisting of a program design, work plan, budget, performance monitoring plan, branding and marketing plan, and key personnel description for Phase 2, which were submitted to USAID on February 11. USAID then provided comments to these documents, which the KPSP incorporated and make resubmission to USAID on March 5. The KPSP then received a letter on March 11 from USAID informing that the KPSP Phase 2 program design was accepted and approved and that the KPSP would proceed to Phase 2 covering the period from April 1, 2011 through September 30, 2013.

During its third quarter, implementation of KPSP Components 1, 2, and 4 gained further momentum and were joined by an additional programming area in the form of Component 3 – Communication and Information. The main activity under Component 3 has been preparation of a bi-weekly Parliamentary Brief in Kyrgyz, English, and Russian. The KPSP also held an outreach event, which was attended by the JK Speaker and US Embassy Charge d’Affairs highlighting key achievements of Phase 1 and outlining the components and their supporting activities under the framework of Phase 2.

During its fourth quarter, implementation of Components 1, 2, 3, and 4 continued forward despite the JK’s July 2, 2011 through August 31, 2011 recess with the KPSP also finalizing and submitting to USAID an A to Z Assessment of the Legislative Drafting Process in Kyrgyzstan along with a companion and supplemental Report on an Electronic Legislation Tracking System, were the JK to commit to adopting and instituting this system. The KPSP and the USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Reform Program (RTLTC) also jointly organized a ceremony held at the JK on September 28 marking provision by the RTLTC of computer and other information technology equipment to assist and upgrade the work of the JK Committee Department for Economic Strategy, Investment Policy, and Tourism.

The conclusion of the fourth quarter on September 30, 2011, marked the completion of KPSP Year One.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Two DAI Home Office-based staff arrived in Kyrgyzstan on October 10, 2010; Acting KPSP COP, Thomas Bridle, who stayed until December 19, 2010 and Ugulay Satarova, Senior Project Coordinator who stayed for two weeks during start-up.

On the basis of interviews, the KPSP first hired a Senior Legislative Expert, Sheradil Bakhtygulov. Mr. Bakhtygulov is a respected, well known and highly experienced specialist in legislative relations and governance. The Program then subsequently hired Jenish Arzymatov. Mr. Arzymatov had been originally retained as a legal counsel to the Program and had proven himself extremely helpful and capable, as a legal expert. The KPSP also hired a full-time office manager and accountant, Julia Korneeva. Ms. Korneeva worked in a similar type of position for the 2008-2010 USAID Kyrgyzstan Judicial Reform Program.

The KPSP set up a one-room office in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, which proved to be a good solution to get the Program up and running quickly. The rent is reasonable and includes security and cleaning; the location is central; and many USAID staff were living in the Hyatt during the first quarter so it was convenient for meetings with them and other foreigners. Being in one room proved to be a good way to communicate with KPSP staff and ensure that everyone was on the same page activity-wise.

The KPSP was: legally accredited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a USAID project; obtained VAT and sales tax exemption letters from the Ministry of Economic Regulation; and opened USD and KGS bank accounts at Demir Bank.

In November, 2010, Gregg Halstead was hired as the permanent COP for the KPSP and formally began his duties on January 10, 2011. He had: served for the last 2.5 years as Country Director for the ABA ROLI Armenia Program; worked in legislative strengthening and rule of law programs for more than 14 years in six republics of the Newly Independent States; before that worked as a bill drafter and committee staffer for the Iowa State Legislature; and speaks Russian fluently.

During the second quarter, the KPSP continued setting up mechanisms and procedures for routine office functioning. The Power of Attorney (POA) from the DAI Home Office for Mr. Halstead was received, translated, and notarized for use in Kyrgyzstan. The POA was urgently needed for the COP to be able to withdraw KPSP funds from the Demir Bank to cover training and other expenditures. Mr. Halstead also received his accreditation card on February 4, 2011 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The accreditation card eases entrance into the JK building and other state buildings.

The KPSP designed a full scale parliamentary strengthening program consisting of a program design, work plan, budget, performance monitoring plan, branding and marking plan, and key personnel description for Phase 2, which were submitted to USAID on February 11. USAID then provided comments to these documents, which the KPSP incorporated and make resubmission to USAID on March 5. The KPSP then received a letter on March 11 from USAID informing that the KPSP Phase 2 program design was accepted and approved and that the KPSP will proceed to Phase 2 covering the April 1, 2011 – September 30, 2013 period.

As a consequence, the KPSP: conducted interviews for and competitively hired three additional local staff (two key personnel and an Outreach & Events Coordinator) for Phase 2; and took on additional office space (to house the new Phase 2 staff members) from April 1 conveniently located on the same floor where the main KPSP office space is located.

KPSP staff each also attended a training during the second quarter organized and conducted by USAID on branding and marking. At the training, the importance of USAID contractor and grant recipient compliance with branding and marking rules and regulations was stressed.

During the third quarter, the KPSP completed smoothly transitioning to Phase 2. Three additional staff members (Jamyila Nurumbetova, Program Officer, Parliamentary Management and Leadership, Nurzhan Mamyratieva, Program Officer, Communication and Information, and Aijan Sharshenova, Outreach & Events Coordinator) completed new employee orientation, began working, and executed employment agreements with DAI. At meetings with their corresponding JK counterparts during early April, the new staff were individually introduced and fully integrated into KPSP activities.

During the fourth quarter, Program management, administration, and keeping the KPSP moving forward in a smooth fashion faced four main challenges.

First, the JK went on its summer recess from July 2, 2011 through August 31, 2011 making organization and holding of programmatic related events difficult. The availability of JK MPs for attendance at meetings and events was extremely limited during July and August.

Second, Kyrgyz employment law by US standards provides for long vacations with each full-time employee earning 28 days of annual vacation. In order to prevent vacation days for KPSP staff from accumulating over the life of the Program to unmanageable numbers, staff despite heavy workloads need to regularly take vacation days to keep these accumulated amounts down. Hence, it was important that KPSP staff take vacation during the July or August months while the JK recess resulted in a somewhat reduced amount of work.

Third, the next obligation of funds from USAID to the KPSP was an extended process spanning from May of the third quarter to ultimate receipt of the new 500,000 USD obligation on July 22, 2011. DAI was forced to go at risk from July 8, 2011 using its own internal funds to keep the Program running while the new obligation was being approved. The lack of funds during the early days of the fourth quarter resulted in postponing STTAs relating to IT installation, training on use of the TAMIS system, fully converting to the DAI Field Accounting System, and most significantly, on updating the PMP until later in the fourth quarter and into the fifth quarter. As the fourth quarter ended, the IT system had been fully installed despite the original choice for the STTA, a citizen of Afghanistan being unable to secure an entry visa for Kyrgyzstan.

Fourth, the approaching Kyrgyz presidential election to be held during the fifth quarter on October 30, 2011 forced postponing from September to November 2011 follow up trainings under Component 4 aimed at improving JK sub-department and sub-division human resources management practices. Partly due to the presidential election and the related extremely heavy legislative agenda during each plenary session day in September, these JK staff were largely unable to attend KPSP Component 4 trainings, hence, their postponement until November. However, each of these challenges was effectively managed and dealt with and KPSP programming while somewhat slowing during the fourth quarter continued successfully forward under the KPSP's 1-4 programming components.

During the fourth quarter, the KPSP also submitted to USAID on August 30, 2011 its Year Two Work Plan covering October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012 (the Year Two Work Plan was approved by USAID on October 6, 2011).

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

COMPONENT 1 – LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

KPSP support and activities under this component are focused on the legislative process and legal concepts and avoid any advocacy—or the perception of advocacy—on the substance of policy issues. The primary counterparts for this component are the JK Legal Department, Legal Expertise Division, and MPs. The main goal is to improve the ability of these counterparts to draft legislation and conduct analysis of legislation being drafted. During previous parliaments in Kyrgyzstan and continuing during the current JK, 60 to 70 percent of draft legislation was and is originating in the Kyrgyz executive branch. While this is a normal practice in parliamentary systems in which the executive branch is largely an extension of the legislative branch, the JK nevertheless under any criteria needs to improve and upgrade its in house legal drafting and analysis capacity. Doing so will better enable the JK to assert its constitutional prerogative as the main engine for producing and developing legislation to address economic, social, and other important issues in the country. In addition, KPSP activities during year one found a significant lack of coordination between the JK and the executive branch in terms of legislative drafting. These shortcomings were researched and documented in an A to Z Assessment of the Legislative Drafting Process in Kyrgyzstan that the KPSP conducted in April 2011. Accordingly, KPSP

activities under this component were also aimed a facilitating improvement in coordination of the legislative drafting process between the JK, the Prime Minister's Office, the President's Office, and the Ministry of Justice.

Under Component 1 in total during year one, 10 separate capacity building events attended in aggregate by 265 JK staff and 34 MPs were organized and held. These events consisted of¹:

- three trainings on Legislative Process, Procedure, and Drafting with 69 participants attending (38 MP consultants, 29 MPs, and two JK committee department staff);
- two trainings on Regulatory Impact Analysis with 85 participants attending (80 JK staff and five MPs);
- three trainings on Legislative Analysis and Drafting with 60 participants attending (JK committee department staff, Legal Department staff, Legal Expertise Division staff, and Prime Minister's Office legal staff);
- one training on the Committee Legislative Oversight Process with 20 participants attending (representing committee department staff from 15 of the 16 JK committees);
- one round table on Improving Coordination of the Legislative Drafting Process with 65 participants attending (heads of JK committee departments, Prime Minister's Office legal staff, President's Office legal staff, and Ministry of Justice legal staff);

Also through utilizing and housing an experienced legislative and parliamentary expert within the JK Legal Department, KPSP Component 1 also assisted in drafting 41 legislative proposals and producing of 14 internal regulations for and adopted by the JK.

Component 1 also produced two major assessment reports researched and written by international and local KPSP consultants: 1) the Assessment of the Legislative Drafting Process in Kyrgyzstan (mentioned above); and 2) a Report on the Electronic Legislation Tracking System analyzing the technical aspects, merits, and costs were the JK to acquire such system.

The KPSP also reached out to and engaged the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) Program in December 2010 to partner with the JK Legal Department by providing information technology equipment in the form of computers, printers, scanners, and photo copiers. A ceremony was then jointly organized by the KPSP and OTI and held at the JK on January 24, 2011 marking the transfer of this equipment and featuring attendance and remarks by US

¹ For each event held during year one under Components 1, 2, 3, and 4, the KPSP prepared an individual write up on the event describing the topic(s) discussed, who participated, and the results. In addition, information on each event is also contained in corresponding KPSP year one quarterly progress and weekly reports.

Ambassador, Tatiana Gfoeller. The procurement proved vital to upgrading the work of the Legal Department since much of its information technology equipment was either antiquated or had been stolen or damaged in the looting which occurred during the events of April 2010.

COMPONENT 2 – COMMITTEE STRENGTHING

KPSP support and activities under this component during year one were focused on the:

1. JK Budget and Finance Committee;
2. JK Economic Strategy, Investment Policy, and Tourism Committee;
3. JK Youth Policy, Physical Education Development, and Sport Committee.

These legislative committees were chosen in close consultation with USAID. Two to four MPs from each committee were identified as a target group with other committee members and all interested MPs in general invited to attend and participate in KPSP sponsored and organized policy seminars, public hearings, field hearings, and parliamentary hearings. These events were conducted in an interactive manner including round table discussions with differing points of view represented and adequate time for committee members to pose questions to ministers, deputy ministers, and other Kyrgyz executive branch officials in attendance. Events were also structured in such a way as to make clear and reinforce that JK committees are now the senior partner in the relationship with the corresponding executive branch ministry.

The main goal at KPSP committee related events was to seek public and civil society input and expertise and consequently make MPs more knowledgeable on a particular issue(s) prior to their making decisions and taking actions aimed at achieving the most effective solution and optimal resolution. In this manner, the KPSP utilized the existing JK Rules and Procedures on conducting policy seminars, and parliamentary and public hearings but simultaneously sought to improve procedures being utilized thereby making discussions more substantive.

An additional main goal at KPSP committee related events and in general under Component 2 activities and initiatives was to improve the ability of the committees to exercise oversight over the executive branch decisions and actions. In this manner, each KPSP committee event held included attendees from the executive branch charged with implementation of adopted laws as well as formulation of administrative (implementing) regulations. Such events facilitated better communications between the committee involved and its subject ministry as well as instilling more accountability within the executive branch under the scrutiny and oversight of JK legislative committees.

JK committee department staff also constituted an additional target group receiving assistance and support under Component 2. The KPSP made use of a combination of academic and interactive educational and training approaches with committee department staff trained on methods of conducting and inputting policy analyses into legislative decision-making. JK committee staff also received training and gained direct hands on experience in how to effectively organize and structure committee events.

Under Component 2 in total during year one, 12 separate events attended in aggregate by 636 JK staff and 62 MPs were organized and held. These events consisted of:

- five public forums on the stated budget process, anti-corruption activities, the business environment (attended and moderated by the JK Speaker), unemployment in Kyrgyzstan, and youth policy;
- three policy seminars on Custom's Union entrance, Issyk-Kul tourism, and passport issuance simplification;
- two digital video conferences on passport simplification with audiences in Osh and Jalal-Abad;
- one on site field hearing with accompany site inspection visits on Issyk-Kul tourism;
- a training on budgetary oversight conducted by an ex-Kyrgyz Minister of Finance and ex-Kyrgyz Minister of Economic Regulation.

The KPSP also reached out to and engaged the USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Reform (RTL) Program to partner with the JK Committee Department for Economic Strategy, Investment Policy, and Tourism by providing information technology equipment in the form of computers, printers, scanners, and photo copiers. A ceremony was then jointly organized by the KPSP and RTL and held at the JK on September 28, 2011 marking the transfer of this equipment. The procurement proved vital to upgrading the work of the Committee Department since much of its information technology equipment was antiquated.

COMPONENT 3 – COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

KPSP support and activities under this component are focused on assisting the JK Press Service to better inform civil society and the public on the daily activities of their elected representatives. A primary task for Component 3 is identifying target groups and audiences, which singularly and collectively contribute to information distribution and play a crucial role in the making of the

JK's public image. Journalists covering the JK, the 14 members of the JK Press Service, MPs' assistants and consultants, and MPs and their regional representatives as well as staff from parliamentary factions and committee departments play a crucial role in JK information distribution and interpretation. Under the framework of Component 3, the KPSP assists these groups through various types of capacity building trainings and other targeted activities that better inform the Kyrgyz public on JK activities, improve the substantive journalist product being presented in terms of accuracy and objectivity, and establish closer professional working relations between journalists and the JK Press Service.

Under Component 3 in total during year one, two separate training events attended in aggregate by 19 JK staff and 14 JK accredited journalists were organized and held. These events consisted of:

- a four day training in June 2011 for the JK Press Service on “Being a Comprehensive Supplier of Information” – attended by the 14 members of the JK Press Service including its Director;
- a two day training in September 2011 for accredited journalists to the JK and the JK Press Service on “A Parliamentary Correspondent – Seller of Information or Objective Informer” – attended by five members of the JK Press Service including its Director and 14 JK accredited journalists.

An additional main activity under Component 3 during year one was preparation and dissemination of a Parliamentary Brief reporting on JK activities and events. The Parliamentary Brief was prepared in English, Kyrgyz, and Russian and issued on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Parliamentary Brief highlighted bills under consideration and being voted upon by the JK as well as the activities of the JK Speaker, committees, factions, and individual MPs. In total, beginning from May 1, 2011, the KPSP during year one prepared in English, Kyrgyz, and Russian 36 separate issues of the Parliamentary Brief, which were disseminated to 108 persons/organizations consisting of 27 English speaking persons/organizations and 81 Kyrgyz/Russian speaking persons/organizations.

COMPONENT 4 –

PARLIAMENTARY MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

KPSP support and activities under this component are focused on assisting the JK HR Division to create a more professionally run institution and build its internal capacity to train JK staff in

the technical skills needed to work more effectively. Building and increasing the training capacity of the HR Division to independently conduct continuous trainings for JK staff including for MP consultants and assistants is being simultaneously accompanied by and supplemented with outreach to and transfer of knowledge within the HR Division and the JK in general on western-competitive hiring and promotion procedures and human resource management practices.

Under Component 4 in total during year one, six separate training events attended in aggregate by 276 JK staff were organized and held. Each of these events was conducted with the active partnership of the HR Division. These training events consisted of:

- conducting a comprehensive orientation training in February 2011 for all consultants and assistants of JK MPs - the number of JK staff trained was 179 persons;
- through a Train the Trainers seminar, prepared six trainers from among the permanent JK [non-elected] Administration staff who have been subsequently and repeatedly utilized as an in-house training arm within the JK;
- conducting two trainings on acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for assistants and consultants of JK MPs. The trainings were conducted by trainers trained by the KPSP (as mentioned above) - the number of JK staff trained was 48 persons;
- conducting two trainings for heads of structural subdivisions of the JK [non-elected] Administration staff to acquire knowledge and skills in human resource management within state bodies - the number of JK staff trained was 43 persons.

The KPSP also reached out to and engaged the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) Program in December 2010 to partner with the HR Division by providing information technology equipment in the form of computers, printers, scanners, and photo copiers. A ceremony was then jointly organized by the KPSP and OTI and held at the JK on January 24, 2011 marking the transfer of this equipment and featuring attendance and remarks by US Ambassador, Tatiana Gfoeller. The procurement proved vital to upgrading the work of the HR Division since much of its information technology equipment was either antiquated or had been stolen or damaged in the looting which occurred during the events of April 2010.

TOTALS – EVENTS HELD AND ATTENDEES

Under KPSP Components 1, 2, 3, and 4 in total during year one, 30 separate types of (mainly capacity building) events attended in aggregate by 1,196 JK staff and 96 MPs were successfully planned, organized and carried out. Written and oral feedback obtained from attendees was uniformly positive and complimentary.

GENDER

Each event conducted by the KPSP involving and attended by JK staff and MPs were fully gender inclusive and integrated. In terms of JK staff, out of 1,196 overall attendees at KPSP events, 543 were female constituting 45.4 percent of attendees. In terms of JK MPs, out of 120 MPs, 26 are female constituting 21.6 percent.

Specifically, the KPSP during year one worked closely with women from the JK holding the following key positions:

- Two Vice-Speakers;
- Chair of the JK Youth Policy, Physical Education Development, and Sport Committee;
- Chair of the JK Social Policy, Health Care, Labor, and Migration Committee;
- Influential member of the JK Economic Strategy, Investment Policy, and Tourism Committee;
- Rank and file MPs;
- Deputy Head of the JK [non-elected] Administration;
- Head of the JK Legal Expertise Division;
- Deputy Head of the JK Legal Department;
- Deputy Head of the JK HR Division;
- Numerous JK committee department staff;
- Numerous JK Legal Department staff;
- Numerous JK Legal Expertise Division staff;
- Numerous JK Press Service staff;

- Numerous MP consultants and assistants.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The KPSP met numerous times during year one with the Chair of the JK Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Public Organizations Committee, who himself is a person with a disability having limited eyesight. As a result of these meetings and interactions with the Chair, the KPSP agreed that it would render support and assistance to this Committee when key legislative issues arise concerning the status of persons with disabilities. Such cooperation included the passport simplification issue (having special significance for persons with disabilities since they are often without the physical mobility necessary to collect supporting documents needed for passport receipt) and will also include during year two issues relating to improving existing legislation to give employers more incentives to hire persons with disabilities. Specifically, during the first month of year two, the KPSP will support this Committee in holding separate policy seminars relating to passport issuance simplification and employment of persons with disabilities. This support will be followed up through the work of the Committee and with the Chair in the JK plenary.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER DONORS

The KPSP reached out to and engaged the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) Program in December 2010 to partner with the JK Legal Department and HR Division by providing information technology equipment in the form of computers, printers, scanners, and photo copiers. A ceremony was then jointly organized by the KPSP and OTI and held at the JK on January 24, 2011 marking the transfer of this equipment and featuring attendance and remarks by US Ambassador, Tatiana Gfoeller. The procurement proved vital to upgrading the work of the Legal Department and HR Division since much of their information technology equipment was either antiquated or had been stolen or damaged in the looting which occurred during the events of April 2010.

During the first and second quarters, the KPSP and UNDP Parliamentary Assistance Program agreed to and followed some key principles of cooperation in future quarters including:

- meeting frequently;
- exchanging work plans;
- inviting each other to one another's trainings and events;

- agreeing on who would work with which JK committees, with the KPSP's focus being on committees that work on economic and social issues.

During the first and second quarters, the KPSP also established constructive working relations with a number other USAID-funded implementers including NDI, IRI, BEI, RTLC, EREC, IFES, Freedom House, Internews, and the Youth Project as well as with the Resident Legal Advisor from the US Embassy. On numerous occasions the KPSP served as a bridge between and putting these implementers in touch with their corresponding colleagues from the JK, be it committee chairs, MPs, and/or staff.

In addition, the KPSP jointly held separate programmatic events during year one with RTLC, UNDP, the Youth Project, and BEI.

The KPSP also made contact with and facilitated the USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Reform (RTLC) Program to partner with the JK Committee Department for Economic Strategy, Investment Policy, and Tourism by providing information technology equipment in the form of computers, printers, scanners, and photo copiers. A ceremony was then jointly organized by the KPSP and RTLC and held at the JK on September 28, 2011 marking the transfer of this equipment. The procurement proved vital to upgrading the work of the Committee Department since much of its information technology equipment was antiquated.